
XVI. *Some Account of the Trichiurus Lepturus of Linnæus, found on the Shore of the Moray-Frith.* By Mr. James Hoy, F. L. S.

Read February 16, 1813.

ON the 2d of November 1810, after a high wind from the north, a specimen of the *Trichiurus Lepturus* of *Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 429*, was cast upon the shore of the Moray-Frith, near the fishing village of Port Gordon, about three miles east from the mouth of the River Spey; and it was brought to me the next day as a kind of fish which had never been seen before by any of the fishermen in this part of the country. They said that, in seeking for lobsters cast ashore by the storm, they found it lying dead upon the sandy beach. Its head was much broken, probably by being dashed upon the rocks about low-water mark: the bones of the upper part of the head still remained, and the sockets of the eyes were distinguishable, very near to each other: the extremity of the upper jaw, or upper part of the mouth, was entire; upon either side of which was an *operculum*. The length of the head could not be measured exactly, but was about eight or nine inches: the body, from the gills to the point of the tail, was three feet two inches long; its greatest breadth six inches and a quarter; and its greatest thickness only an inch: the vent was two inches from the gills; these were much broken, and partly gone, so that the number of the rays could not be ascertained. Both sides of the fish were wholly white, without a spot upon them;

them; the dorsal fin was the only part of a different colour, being a blackish green: this fin ran all along the back from the gills to the tail, consisting of a great number of rays, soft, and little more than an inch long. Each of the pectoral fins had six double rays. There were no ventral nor anal fins; but the belly was a sharp, smooth, and entire edge. The tail ended in a point, consisting of three or four soft spines or bristles of different lengths, not exceeding two inches. The body was nearly of the same breadth for one half of its length, and then its breadth diminished gradually till within three inches of the tail, when the diminution became more quick. The lateral line was straight, and strongly marked along the middle of the two sides.

This was the first individual of the genus *Trichiurus* (as far as I know) that had ever been found on the British coast. But although the fishermen have not found out the means to catch them, it now appears that these fish inhabit our seas; for upon the 12th of November 1812 another of them was found on the beach, hard by the same fishing village as the former, but of a much larger size; it was brought next day in a cart to the Duke of Gordon, at whose desire I made the following observations:

Its head had been broken off, and was quite gone, a small bit of the gills only remained about the upper part of the throat; from whence to the extremity of the tail its length was twelve feet nine inches: its breadth, eleven inches and a quarter, was nearly equal for the first six feet in length from the gills, diminishing gradually from thence to the tail, which ended in a blunt point, without any of those kind of bristles which projected from the tail of the one found formerly: its greatest thickness was two inches and a half. The distance from the gills to the anus forty-six inches. The dorsal fin extended from the head to the tail, but was much torn and broken: the bones or muscles, to which the

pectoral fins had been attached, were perceivable very near the gills. There were no ventral nor anal fins; but the thin edge of the belly was closely mucronated with small hard points which, although scarcely visible through the skin, were very plainly felt all along it. Both sides of the fish were white, with four longitudinal bars of a darker colour; the one immediately below the dorsal fin was about two inches broad; each of the other three about three-fourths of an inch. The side-line straight along the middle.

As the fish appeared to be very fresh, a cut of it was boiled, which I tasted, and found to be very good, approaching nearly in taste to the *Anarhichas lupus*, which I had an opportunity of tasting only a few days before.

Gordon Castle,
January 9, 1813.